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ABSTRACT

Language minority students, including immigrants and their American-born children, may have to contend with a mismatch between the language and the culture of their schools and those of their homes and communities. To broaden the base of support for these students and to help address their academic needs appropriately, some schools have been partnering with community-based organizations (CBOs). This report outlines findings from a study of school/CBO partnerships that promote the academic achievement of language minority students. It describes the type of CBOs that partner with schools, the ways the partners work together, and the work they do. Crucial elements of program success are discussed, as well as the challenges that partnerships may face. The following recommendations for developing effective partnerships came from partnerships described in this report. Partnership recommendations include assuring that potential partners are fully committed to the partnership and maintaining communication among partners. Program recommendations are threefold: ensure strong leadership at the program level; start small and build up carefully; and be on the look out for new opportunities. Finally, two important dimensions of successful partnerships deserve more scrutiny: the contributions of staff members who share the clients background, and the effects of partnership and program plasticity and the need to find the right balance between consistency and flexibility. (Contains 13 references.) (Author/KFT)

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BROADENING THE BASE:
SCHOOL/COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS SERVING LANGUAGE MINORITY STUDENTS AT RISK

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EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE REPORT
6

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CENTER FOR APPLIED LINGUISTICS

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ABSTRACT

Language minority students, including immigrants and the U.S.-born children of immigrants, may have to contend with a mismatch between the language and culture of their schools and those of their homes and communities. To broaden the base of support for these students and to help address their academic needs appropriately, some schools have been partnering with community-based organizations (CBOs). This report outlines findings from a study of school/CBO partnerships that promote the academic achievement of language minority students. It describes the types of CBOs that partner with schools, the ways that partners work together, and the work that they do. Crucial elements of program success are discussed, as well as challenges that partnerships may face. There are recommendations from experienced partners that may benefit new partnerships.

INTRODUCTION

Research has established the benefits of outside support for students and schools (Epstein, 1995; Rutherford & Billig, 1995). Working alone, schools and families may not be able to provide every student with the support needed for academic success (Kirst, 1991). Language minority students, in particular, may face obstacles resulting from a mismatch between their language and culture and the language and culture of the school, and from the school system's difficulty in addressing their academic needs appropriately. To broaden the base of support for these students, some schools are partnering with community-based organizations (CBOs)—groups committed to helping people obtain health, education, and other basic human services (Dryfoos, 1998). These arrangements are promising, because they can connect the schools directly with the community and assist students in ways that lie beyond the schools' traditional methods (Davis, 1991; Dryfoos, 1998; Heath, 1993; Heath & McLaughlin, 1991; Jones, 1992). But studies of school/CBO partnerships have not focused on language minority students in particular (Dryfoos, 1998; Melaville, 1998).

This report outlines findings from a study of partnerships that promote the academic achievement of language minority students. It describes the types of CBOs that partner with schools, the ways that partners work together, and the work that they do. Crucial elements in program success are discussed, as well as challenges that partnerships may face. There are recommendations from experienced partners that may benefit new partnerships.

STUDYING PARTNERSHIPS

The findings reported here come from a national survey of school/CBO partnerships that were nominated for their effectiveness. (The table in the appendix lists these partnerships and their functions; boldface indicates partnerships that were visited by the authors of this report.) Partnerships were identified by advocacy organizations such as the National Coalition of Advocates for Students, the U.S. Department of Education's Comprehensive Regional Technical Assistance Centers and Regional Educational Laboratories, state departments of education, individuals responding to requests posted on three listservs and the Web site at the Center for Applied Linguistics, and informal networks of individuals concerned with education for language minority students. This nomination process identified more than 100 partnerships considered successful, 62 of which met the study's parameters. Half of those 62 completed a survey on the partnership and its programs—goals and services, program evaluation, client characteristics, characteristics of the partnership, and advice for new partnerships.

All of the 31 partnerships responding to the survey offer rich programs for at-risk students and families from language minority backgrounds— that is, those for whom English is not the first language. The programs operate in a variety of settings: schools and school district offices, separate buildings on the school campus, community education and counseling service centers, community centers, university campuses, and CBO offices. One partnership provides programs in an apartment building where students live. The majority (75%) operate programs during and after school, but some partnerships provide programs before school (23%), on weekends (32%), during the summer (58%), during breaks in the academic year (23%), or in the evening (6%).

Half of the partnerships serve fewer than 200 students, but some of the larger partnerships serve more than 1,000. The majority serve clients who are all or nearly all English language learners. One third serve only Spanish speakers. The others serve multilingual populations in which Spanish speakers are most numerous (58%), followed by

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Vietnamese, Haitian Creole, Chinese, Lao, and Tongan speakers. Another nine language groups were mentioned by only one respondent each (e.g., Urdu, Tagalog, and Arabic). Typically, students enroll in the partnerships' programs through school referral based on teachers' concerns, grade point average, testing results, limited English proficiency, attendance, or personal or family problems, but students also enroll voluntarily. Some programs enroll every student in the schools they serve. Students exit the programs mainly by meeting the program goals or leaving the school.

TYPES OF CBOS THAT PARTNER WITH SCHOOLS

The CBOs that join with schools to support language minority students fall into three broad categories. Some are ethnic organizations serving as culture brokers for the school, the students, their families, and other community members. For example, the Filipino Community of Seattle partners with the Seattle Public Schools to operate the Filipino Youth Empowerment Project.

Filipino Youth Empowerment Project, Seattle, Washington

After a gang-related death in 1995, the Filipino Community of Seattle, an ethnic organization, convened community members to search for ways to shelter young Filipinos from violence. At a subsequent leadership training session, young people outlined a program that would keep their peers out of trouble and in school. Their planning led eventually to a partnership between the Seattle Public Schools and the Filipino Community of Seattle with funding from the city to support the Filipino Youth Empowerment Project. The Project provides tutoring by older high school and college students, peer mentoring, and information for immigrant parents about the issues their children experience as they fit into U.S. schools and society. Peer tutors are trained in group facilitation strategies, behavior management, and juvenile intervention. Schools refer students who are having academic or behavioral problems to the Project. Project staff report back to the schools on students' progress in the tutoring and mentoring program. Although the Project continues to focus on students of Filipino heritage, it is now open to students of any ethnicity. It serves 30-35 high school students each year. Of the first cohort to graduate from high school, in 1998, 75% went on to college.

The Filipino Youth Empowerment Project also operates Filipino-American student clubs in high schools and leadership training forums for young people at the Filipino Community Center. In these forums, "youth advocates," who are graduates of the Filipino Youth Empowerment Project, help high school students understand their cultural heritage, address family problems, and plan for the future. These advocates know what it means to grow up in traditional Filipino households and to thread their way through high school and into post-secondary education.

There are 23 high schools, community colleges, universities, and other organizations involved in this partnership. The CBO takes the lead in organizing activities and keeping the program responsive to its clients. The CBO director meets with school principals to encourage them to make referrals to the Filipino Youth Empowerment Project and to update them on new activities, and Project staff meet with school staff to report on students' progress.

Some CBOs are formed specifically to partner with schools. The Pacoima Urban Village began as a community-based organization dedicated to partnering with one elementary school.

The Pacoima Urban Village, Pacoima, CA

In 1990, community members concerned about the quality of their children's education worked with local CBOs to organize a parent center at an elementary school. At the time, the school had poor attendance and the lowest performance on standardized tests in the cluster to which it belongs. There was tension among teachers and African American and Latino students, and parents felt alienated from the school. With the opening of the family center, parents could gather to get acquainted and plan ways to work with the school. Within two years, the school had reorganized as a charter school with substantial parent involvement. Test scores and attendance rose to the highest in the cluster. Mobility fell from 40% to 10%. Families were remaining in the neighborhood in order to keep their children in the school.

For several years, the community worked unusually closely with the school through the center. Parents became quite involved in the school's academic program. Twice-weekly meetings of an integrated services team with school and community representatives considered referrals for tutoring and family services. Parents served on committees, visited classrooms, and conferred with teachers about their observations. The school relied on the family center to help keep the attendance rate high. Community members working at the family center informed the school when families had trouble and assisted the families.

At the same time, the family center was extending its programs and its influence. Through partnerships with local CBOs, a nurse practitioner saw clients and gave vaccinations on site. Another organization provided prenatal care, and Healthy Start offered training for parents. A clothing distribution center developed spontaneously after an earthquake cut off water and electricity.

Eventually, community members who had developed the family center established the Pacoima Urban Village. Disagreement over power-sharing with the school motivated them to circumvent the educational system's bureaucracy. At present, they are working directly with children and their families to address the need for first language development at a school's request. Pacoima Urban Village continues the community's original mission to eliminate academic barriers for children through education, health, and leadership development in the community.

Most commonly though, the CBOs that partner with schools are multi-purpose organizations providing more than one program. An example is the Chinatown Service Center in Los Angeles that operates the Castelar Healthy Start program at Castelar Elementary School, offering tutoring for students as well as health and other services for families. At other locations, the Chinatown Service Center operates a licensed community health clinic, a social services program, a counseling program, and an employment program for adults.

Like the Chinatown Service Center, many CBOs are nonprofit organizations with tax exempt status under Section 501(C)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, but other groups that are based in the community and that provide service are also referred to as CBOs. For example, the Employment and Training Centers in Houston, Texas, is a for-profit community-based organization that provides educational services, chiefly to Hispanic students, including the Language Acquisition and Transition Program.

INSIDE SCHOOL/CBO PARTNERSHIPS

Partnerships linking schools and CBOs take different configurations. They may include only one school or several, only one CBO or more than one. The school district may be a partner. In one very large partnership, the New York City United Way partners with the New York City Board of Education in the Community Achievement Project in the Schools (CAPS). CAPS serves as the point of entry into the schools for more than a

hundred CBOs partnering with more than a hundred schools to "enhance students' well-being, attendance, and academic performance" (*Community Achievement Project in the Schools*, n.d., p. 1).

Many school/CBO partnerships responding to the survey had additional partners, including colleges or universities (58%) and businesses (29%). Federal, state, and local government agencies may provide social and other services at the program site. A government agency may participate by specifying partnership and program structure, providing funding, and evaluating the program. All but 3 of the 31 partnerships responding to the survey received local, state, or federal funding. An example is the California Healthy Start initiative, which funds programs to integrate the education, health, and social service systems for the benefit of children and families. Healthy Start funds school/CBO partnerships, disseminates information across partnerships, and evaluates their programs. The Bell Cluster Healthy Start program is one of these. The Bell Cluster Healthy Start Center began with a grant from Healthy Start, then added other programs.

Bell Cluster Healthy Start Center, Bell, CA

The Bell Cluster Healthy Start Center was instituted in 1991 as a partnership between two CBOs and the Bell Cluster schools in the Los Angeles Unified School District. This partnership developed a state-funded Healthy Start program that provides parenting classes and ESL instruction for parents of young children. At present, the Bell Cluster Healthy Start Center coordinates a number of complementary programs in addition to the Healthy Start program. The Comadres/Compadres program helps parents participate in schools. Several programs are aimed at providing tutoring for students of all ages and overcoming barriers to student achievement, including problems with nutrition, health, alcohol, and drugs. The Community of Caring program focuses on pregnancy prevention for teenagers, and the Building Healthy Communities program focuses on health and medical services for students and their families.

Located on the Bell High School campus, the Bell Cluster Healthy Start Center serves all of the schools in the cluster, each of which has a parent center. At the Center, a resource team composed of representatives from each school and its parent center meets monthly to consider referrals for needs that the schools cannot fill. This team also includes a social worker; a nurse practitioner; representatives from the local Department of Children and Family Services, the police department, the probation department, the district attorney's office, the PTA, and a mental health association; and a parent advocate. Pulling together school, community, and social service representatives, the team is able to make appropriate connections between service providers and students or families who need services.

In the Bell Cluster, 97% of the students are Hispanic, 85% of whom are of Mexican-American heritage. Others are recent immigrants from Central or South America. Many staff members at Bell High School, at the Bell Cluster Healthy Start Center, and in social service agencies in the area graduated from Bell High School and still live in the area. Thus they bring to their work deep knowledge of the school, the community, the culture, and the language, as well as commitment to promoting students' school success and families' well being.

Partnership Models

Partners adopt various kinds of working relationships (Crowson & Boyd, n.d.). Sometimes they maintain close connections: School and CBO staff confer frequently and make decisions jointly. Some partnerships begin as marriages of convenience to qualify

for external funds. One of the organizations hires the staff who lead the work, and the other(s) provide(s) funds and specialized resources, such as workshop facilitators and speakers. Ten of the 31 survey respondents indicated that the partnership's efforts are led by the school partner; seven indicated that a partner outside the school takes the lead. Twelve reported that frequent contact in regular meetings and informal communication allowed shared decision-making. (Two did not reply to this question.)

Partners' Contributions

Partners have different resources to offer each other. Schools are uniquely able to refer students to the school/CBO partnerships' programs, based on school performance data and other information; CBOs may bring in health and other social services, outreach to the community, and volunteer mentoring. Other kinds of contributions come from both the school and the partners: staff, space, funding, political support, volunteers, program direction, evaluation, skills training for students, access to the workplace, and transportation.

The Dynamics of Partnership

Unlike schools, which operate in a context of regulation and tradition, school/CBO partnerships tend to be fluid. Very often, organizations come together to develop a single project. As it shows success, new projects or programs with new funding are added. Projects add new program areas or expand those they have, and new partners are recruited or volunteer to join. New partners bring new services that enhance and modify the original project. Groups may also leave the partnership, usually because their funding runs out. Each partnership studied had a history of changing partners or modifying programs. Project Look is one example.

Project Look, Seattle, Washington

Project Look operates three "apartment schools" in apartment complexes located near elementary schools that serve low-income language minority students: Russians, Latinos, Cambodians, Vietnamese, and Pacific Islanders. These apartment schools are not really schools: They are centers that provide a safe place for students in Grades 1 through 6 to stay after school for help with homework and tutoring. Students enter the program through teacher referrals. The program began with a singular focus on academics but soon expanded. Project Look now also targets prevention of alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use; dropout and violence prevention; and the provision of social services for families. During school hours, there are programs for parents, including GED preparation. In addition to a full-time program director, each site employs teachers and other staff members who speak the languages of the students and their parents and share their cultures. Formal evaluation shows impressive improvement in students' academic achievement and school attendance. Teachers report that students develop better study skills and understanding of their community.

Project Look grew out of conversations among a principal, a teacher, and a university professor. Through their institutions, they secured a state grant in 1992 to support the academic achievement of language minority students at risk for school failure. Now, 35 agencies participate in the project, including the school district, the schools whose students participate in Project Look, the public health and mental health departments of the local government, local libraries, a university, two community colleges, the Rotary Club, the police department, several CBOs, businesses, and others. At one of the apartment schools, the building owners provide space for a police drop-in center offering crisis intervention and educational programs.

There is great variability across school/CBO partnerships in the identity of the partners, the ways that they relate to each other, the contributions that each brings to the partnership, and membership over time. The dynamic nature of these partnerships, in contrast to the often static, bureaucratic nature of schools (Darling-Hammond, 1997), means that they are more able to take on new functions as needs and opportunities appear.

FUNCTIONS OF SCHOOL/CBO PARTNERSHIPS

The school/CBO partnership movement is far reaching. It touches students at every age level and fulfills a broad range of functions.

Functions of School/CBO Programs at Different Educational Levels

At the preschool and elementary school level, partnerships often focus on parents and families. They offer a range of services designed to ensure that children are prepared for and supported through school by their families and communities. For example, parenting classes focus on the schools' expectations of parents, guardians, and children (e.g., reading aloud at home and maintaining contact with teachers). These programs also help parents, especially immigrants, meet such challenges as developing English language and literacy skills and finding jobs, which help families achieve the stability that they need to support their children's education. The Alum Rock Even Start Program is one such program.

Alum Rock Even Start Program, San Jose, California

The Alum Rock Even Start Program in San Jose, California, helps immigrant Latino families develop strategies to support their children's education. Staff members who share a language, culture, and life experiences with the families, and who also live in the community, work with parents in their homes, demonstrating family activities that help children succeed in school. They also work with the children and their teachers at school. As a result, they can help teachers understand their students' families and help the families understand their children's school experiences.

Mothers in the program take classes at their children's schools 4 days a week to develop proficiency in oral and written English and to obtain information essential to full participation in U.S. society, such as how public transportation works and where to go for medical services. They also participate in seminars on parenting and in evening social activities for the whole family.

The partnership that sponsors the Alum Rock Even Start Program includes the school district, four schools, a hospital, a CBO counseling center, and other CBOs. The school district manages the program, hires the staff, and develops program activities in consultation with its partners. The hospital and the CBOs organize seminars on family finances, health, jobs, and other topics that concern families. Since the program's inception in 1991, new partners have joined, drawn by the program's success in supporting families in their community. By connecting the CBOs to families who need their services, the Even Start Program helps all of the partners fulfill their service mandates.

This program is regularly evaluated in compliance with funding regulations. Evaluation tracks the children's school achievement as well as parents', teachers', and principals' satisfaction with the program. School staff have seen that parents who participate in the program have grown more comfortable with school involvement. They participate in PTA activities and parent/teacher meetings, and some of them volunteer to help out in their children's classrooms. Some parents who have completed the program now work for the school system.

A few partnerships have made radical changes in elementary schooling. Salome Ureña (IS 218), an intermediate school in upper Manhattan, has a new building, a new curriculum, and new services as the result of a partnership between the Children's Aid Society and the New York City Public Schools. Such a partnership requires not only significant funding, but also dedicated leadership and extensive community support, because what it undertakes is comprehensive—the education and wellness of the whole student in the context of the family.

At the secondary school level, partnerships often use traditional methods of assisting students academically, such as tutoring students in the academic areas, supporting English language development, and organizing programs to promote students' leadership skills and higher education goals. But they also address social factors that may interfere with students' achievement. For example, the Filipino Youth Empowerment program directly targets gang participation as a risk factor (see page 2). This partnership also offers innovative services, such as bridging gaps between immigrant parents and their Americanized children. In secondary schools, partnerships are apt to work with existing school structures without altering them significantly, although this is not always the case.

Several survey respondents mentioned that in addition to serving secondary school students, their partnerships serve students who have completed high school or the GED. For example, the Vocational Building Skills program in Sanders, Arizona, focuses on developing job skills that are directly related to local and regional employment needs, especially carpentry and computer skills.

Partnership Functions in Different Types of School/CBO Programs

The functions of the programs operated by school/CBO partnerships can be classified according to the ways that they relate to the school program. In some cases, the partnership program is closely intertwined with the school's academic program. In other cases, the partnership program is distinct from but complementary to the school's academic program.

Highly integrated programs

Full service schools provide educational programs for students and families as well as comprehensive health and social services. Typically the school and its partners share governance and jointly fund some staff positions. These programs offer health services (e.g., mental health care; medical, dental, and eye exams), programs for parents (e.g., ESL, GED, parenting classes, family literacy), and early childhood programs. Full service programs such as these can be found at Salomé Ureña School in upper Manhattan (home to a program operated with the Children's Aid Society), the Healthy Start sites in California, and the Even Start sites across the country. Another way of bringing the community and CBOs into the schools is through innovative curricula with thematic approaches, such as a Springfield, Massachusetts, Title I program that teaches math through architecture in the community and also offers remedial help and tutoring.

Some school/CBO partnerships operate alternatives to the regular academic programs. Dade County Public Schools (Miami, Florida) contracts with two organizations to run small (under 200 students) middle schools for at-risk students: one is the local chapter of ASPIRA, a national organization whose goal is to develop better educated, more community conscious and committed Latino and minority youth (see page 8); the other is the Cuban-American National Council, a Miami-based group whose goal is to prevent problems from escalating while there is still time to turn disconnected and underachieving young people into students. Using the same basic curriculum as other

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schools, the alternative schools run by these two groups place heavy emphasis on self-discipline and identity. The expectation is that students will enroll in comprehensive high schools following the special middle school program, and most of them do.

ASPIRA, Miami, Florida

ASPIRA of Florida, Inc., operates a number of programs that help Latino and other minority young people—most of them U.S.-born—learn to take leadership roles in their schools and communities. ASPIRA contracts with Dade County Public Schools to operate two alternative middle schools for students at risk for dropping out of school. These schools feature small classes with firm discipline, individual tutoring and counseling, leadership education, and after-school activities that keep students engaged. Activities have included a parade through a troubled community in conjunction with an "Increase the Peace" initiative; instruction from an artist in residence; and a national science, math, and technology program. Teachers and other school staff know the students, their families, and the community. Morale is high. Students and families elect these schools, and there is active parental support for students. One principal believes that a well-organized school helps students develop self-discipline, and she works hard to keep the school functioning smoothly. Teachers stay because they like working with students who want to be in school. Many came to teaching as a second career. Most share students' ethnicity; one who does not said that students told her that she was the first Anglo person they had known.

ASPIRA gathers data on students' school performance and aspirations when they enroll and again each year, and each student has an Independent Student Plan that is updated yearly. Tutoring and counseling focus on helping students follow their plans. The schools are planning to gather follow-up data on their graduates, so that they can determine long-term effects of the alternative school programs.

Another alternative school arrangement is the Language Acquisition and Transition Program run by the for-profit Employment and Training Centers in Houston, Texas, with a curriculum designed specifically for nontraditional language minority students. The program developed from a chance encounter between the organization's vice president and a young Chicano while both were waiting to meet with the principal of a Houston high school. The young man had already been turned away from four high schools either because they were full or because the schools could not figure out where to place him. Like many other school-age teenagers arrested for truancy in Houston, this boy had come to the United States to find employment and learn English. He was not interested in a traditional high school diploma, but he wanted to learn English so that he could land a well-paying job. Understanding both the student's need and the school district's predicament, Employment and Training Centers organized the Language Acquisition and Transition Program for students like him. This alternative program operates at four high schools, helping students complete requirements for graduation or the GED as they learn job skills.

Auxiliary programs

Other school/CBO programs represent a more distant but still highly valued connection between the school's academic program and the partnership's supports for students' school success.

At the South Bronx High School in New York City, what started as a summer remedial program operated by a CBO, the South Bronx Overall Economic Development Corpora-

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tion, developed into a Liberty Partnerships Program with funding from the New York State Department of Education's Bureau of College, School and Community Collaboration. The program now works year-round with some of the most at-risk students who are unprepared for the academic demands of high school.

Liberty Partnerships, New York, New York

The Liberty Partnerships project at a Bronx high school is one of twelve funded by the New York State Department of Education Bureau of College, School and Community Collaboration. Partners in the project include the school, Lehman College, and the South Bronx Overall Economic Development Corporation, a CBO that specializes in job training and placement. Other CBOs have been involved as well. The program serves approximately 400 students in Grades 9 through 12, most of whom are of Hispanic heritage. Students in the program represent roughly the lowest scoring quarter of the school's population. They are identified through diagnostic testing of all incoming ninth graders. The project provides tutoring in academic subjects twice a week, as well as career counseling and job placement. It also offers a Saturday Academy at Lehman College with credit-bearing courses in writing, chemistry, biology, math, and ESL. A summer program reinforces skills and allows students to take the courses they need for graduation. The project participated in restructuring the school's ninth grade program to include block scheduling and interdisciplinary teaching. A full-time project director is on site at the school. The project uses only trained, paid staff, some of whom are graduates of the school who can serve as both mentors and tutors.

Evaluation has shown a positive correlation between hours of tutoring and students' academic achievement, but because the program serves students who enter high school with very poor educational histories, the rate of repeating ninth grade is relatively high. The summer and Saturday programs help students catch up with their age mates.

This partnership is quite collaborative. It grew out of an agreement between the high school and Lehman College to provide a summer program, but its development came about through intensive, democratic planning involving everyone at the school—from the principal to the janitors—as well as CBO and college staff. Time devoted to conferring and planning is considered well spent. The close relationship among individuals in all partner organizations fosters program flexibility and responsiveness.

Many programs bring a strong cultural focus to academic support functions. For example, the Haitian Centers Council, a participant in the CAPS program in New York City, places Haitian representatives in the guidance office of each of the academies at Erazmus Hall High School in Brooklyn. Students can talk to these Council staff members about both academic issues and personal matters, such as how to enter the green card lottery (for permanent U.S. residency status). The Council also offers individually designed tutoring sessions, workshops addressing issues such as pregnancy prevention and access to higher education, and Haitian Club social events. Because the program staff know the students, their families, and the school, they can foster connections among them and ameliorate misunderstandings.

In Everett, Washington, the Refugee and Immigrant Forum tutors students in their native languages in the schools and sometimes even in classrooms (see page 10). Tutors confer with teachers on students' learning needs and academic progress, and they help with other factors that inhibit students' school success. For example, Pentecostal Christian refugees from the former Soviet Union were disturbed that a female

teacher wore pants and makeup. Forum staff helped to alleviate an explosive situation by talking about cultural differences with students and their parents as well as with the teacher. Such cultural trouble-shooting helped keep students in school.

The Refugee and Immigrant Forum of Snohomish County, Everett, WA.

Organized by local churches 20 years ago to aid Southeast Asian refugees, this CBO now employs 14 full-time staff members and coordinates the work of volunteers who share students' languages. Working closely with schools in two school districts, the Refugee and Immigrant Forum of Snohomish County provides mentoring and tutoring in the native language to a mix of immigrants from Asian countries, Russia, Estonia, Georgia, Ethiopia, Cuba, China, and more, serving 2000 students in kindergarten through Grade 12. The Forum also helps students identify and prepare for post-secondary education and employment. Evaluation shows that immigrant young people in the two districts who do not participate in the Forum's programs have a 60% dropout rate; students who have received the Forum's services have a still significant but much lower rate of 25% .

This CBO also provides services for schools. It has offered workshops to acquaint teachers with their students' cultures, pro-bono translation of school fliers for parents and parent-teacher conferences, and workshops for parents on how to work with their children's schools. When schools have received students from unfamiliar cultures, the Forum has identified individuals from that culture who could assist ESL teachers who work with these students.

The two school districts collaborating with the Forum clearly respect the staff's knowledge about language minority students. Because all of the tutors are immigrants, native speakers of the students' languages, and highly knowledgeable about students' families and the community, they help to connect academic and community experiences for students. When the Forum's director pushed a school district to improve and expand its English as a second language curriculum, they eventually revised the program and added summer classes in ESL as she had advised.

In contrast to programs that incorporate academics and those that weave academics and other interests into a whole, these auxiliary programs work within the context of the schools' traditional academic programs. In augmenting the schools' programs, they also leave their mark.

PROGRAM SUCCESS

All of the programs studied have a reputation for effectively supporting the school success of language minority students. This study did not evaluate the programs independently, but rather aimed to discover how experienced program staff account for their program's effectiveness. They were asked to talk and write about their strengths and the challenges they face. Analysis of the data from the site visits and the survey points to four essential elements that lead to program success: adequate resources, partnership and program flexibility, responsiveness to the clients, and evaluation.

Resources

The most important resources for successful programs are staff, funding, space, and materials.

Staff

Site visits to the programs revealed that all have highly competent and committed staffs. Administrators and program leaders, as well as many representatives of the school and CBO partners, are very knowledgeable about their programs and the clients they serve. They show a degree of professional expertise and authority that inspires other staff members and clients and contributes to program stability. Often their professional expertise is amplified by an affiliation or affinity with the client population: shared language and culture and firsthand knowledge of the immigration experience. It happens, of course, that strong leaders may clash. In one case, friction between a strong principal and a strong program director led to the program director's resignation, which put the program in jeopardy for further funding. But most of the partnerships and programs studied have maintained the stable leadership core that Dryfoos (1998) finds essential to program longevity.

The staff who interact with clients also contribute crucially to program success. Although hiring guidelines tend to emphasize credentials, experience, language skills, and training, personal characteristics are just as central to their effectiveness. The director of Project Look in Seattle says she looks for staff who empathize with clients and are not repulsed by poverty. Very often these individuals share their clients' backgrounds as well as their languages. For example, the Alum Rock Even Start Program employs immigrant women who live in the community and who have endured and overcome many of the same social and educational challenges as the parents and children with whom they work. In addition to their liaison function—demonstrating ways that parents of young children can support school success and helping connect parents with teachers—these women serve as role models for clients who have few social contacts outside the community of recent immigrants. Not only do they link parents and schools across cultural and language boundaries, they also give extra help that keeps clients engaged in the program. One staff member persuaded a priest to baptize the child of an unmarried couple—which the couple felt was essential if they were to achieve the social status they deemed necessary to participate in the program.

Another example of the essential intercultural connecting and translating function of staff who are themselves immigrants and who are achieving some measure of success in U.S. society comes from the Colonias Project along the Texas border. Here, Texas A&M University's College of Architecture is working with disenfranchised communities to build community centers that can be used for PTA meetings, parent/teacher conferences, and Even Start programs. Neighborhood women have been hired as *promotoras* (paraprofessionals) to comb the communities for service needs and help residents access services once a community center is built.

Many staff members have close ties to the programs and partnerships with which they work. Some are former clients. Some parents who attended Salomé Ureña in New York later become parent volunteers and then paid parent coordinators at the school. Former gang members, graduates of the Filipino Youth Empowerment Project in Seattle, now serve as youth advocates for the program. Tutors for the Refugee and Immigrant Forum, Everett, Washington, once used the Forum's services themselves. Several staff at the Bell Cluster Healthy Start program in California grew up in the Bell community and graduated from the high school where the CBO is located. These individuals share a language and culture with the program clients as well as personal and political connections that help the programs succeed.

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Funding

Ongoing funding is another key resource. It is also the greatest challenge facing all of the partnerships, even those like the one involving the Chinatown Service Center, which has maintained funding for over 27 years. According to this Center's director, the first grant is not the problem. The real issue is how to keep effective programs going after the first grant runs out. Unlike schools, which know that academic programs will continue even when they have to contend with fluctuating funding, many school/CBO partnerships cannot count on funding beyond the duration of a specific grant. Those without grants depend on the partners' continuing commitment and financial stability.

Financial support for the partnerships comes from a wide range of sources. Some of it flows from U.S. Department of Education entitlement programs and some from state and local government programs. Common sources are Title I and Even Start, but Medicare and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development also contribute. Americorps volunteers work at the Refugee & Immigrant Forum. The state of California funds Healthy Start Programs; New York funds Liberty Partnerships. The local school district supports the alternative middle schools in Florida and the Employment and Training Centers in Texas. Cities provide support (e.g., the Filipino Youth Empowerment Program, Seattle, Washington). Private nonprofit agencies also fund school/CBO partnerships (e.g., the United Way, ASPIRA, and the National Council of La Raza). There is also foundation money: The Kellogg Foundation contributes to the Hispanic Mother-Daughter Program at five University of Texas campuses, aimed at increasing the number of Hispanic girls who go on to college.

Partnerships that include a nonprofit CBO may be more likely to endure over time than those whose community partners are not formally structured. Having the knowledge and the infrastructure required to secure nonprofit status may signal that the organization has the connections and the know-how to keep funds coming in (J. First, personal communication, October 1997).

Space and supplies

Adequate space and supplies to operate programs are also essential, but they were not among the partnerships' top concerns, perhaps because almost all of the projects studied were fairly well established. Interviews suggested that finding space and supplies had been of concern at the time of program start-up or expansion, but that it did not demand the same attention over time as did funding and staffing.

Flexibility

A defining attribute of school/CBO partnerships is structural and programmatic flexibility. Unlike the schools with which they work, the partnerships that link schools with outside organizations are not bound by bureaucratic procedures and traditions. They are free to take on new partners and new programs, to respond to emerging needs, and to take advantage of new opportunities. For example, the Refugee and Immigrant Forum of Snohomish County in Washington (see page 10) was started in 1979 by volunteers who wanted to address the needs of Southeast Asian refugees of all ages. Over the years it has expanded its focus as refugees and immigrants have come to the region from other areas of the world and moved to meet their needs by hiring speakers of other languages. During site visits, staff often mentioned that they were currently responding to a request for proposals that could bring new funding and new capacity. In offering advice for start-up ventures, they stressed the need to remain flexible: "Expect that change demands [that] partnerships . . . offer flexible solutions to problems," said one.

Responsive Program Design

Flexibility goes hand in glove with the third characteristic of successful partnerships: responsiveness to the users. The National Coalition of Advocates for Students (1994) has identified three facets of programs' responsiveness to clients: appropriateness, accessibility, and building on abilities.

Appropriateness

In effective partnerships, program designs are appropriate for the users. For programs that target language minority students, linguistic congruence and cultural appropriateness are essential. All of the partnerships and programs studied consider this matter fundamental. They address it by hiring staff who share clients' linguistic and cultural heritage and who understand their experiences in and out of schools. These staff develop the trusting relationships with clients that are key to program effectiveness. These relationships are more personal than typical teacher/student/family relationships, which have a professional basis, but they are similar in that program staff take an authoritative stance toward the client based on experience, enculturation, and training.

An important dimension of the programming that school/CBO partnerships offer is attention to the whole person. No partner brings all of the knowledge and resources necessary to support young people's development. The schools' mandate is to promote cognitive development. But in their partnerships with CBOs and other organizations, this focus is complemented by others. Partnerships can define and deliver services that children need to perform in their roles as students. Nonetheless, several survey respondents pointed out that partnerships' capacity to help young people is not limitless. Social problems that bear on school success, such as violence, anti-immigrant sentiment, and changes in welfare and other social policy, present significant challenges to partnerships. In this regard, the efforts of the Filipino Youth Empowerment project to help young people thrive in a dangerous society by reducing gang participation illuminate the possibilities for designing programs that consider the students' social context broadly.

Accessibility

Effective programs are accessible to clients both physically and psychologically. Clients must feel comfortable in the program setting or they will not participate. Transportation can be a problem. The Alum Rock Even Start program addresses this challenge by offering parenting and ESL programs for mothers at the school buildings at the start of the school day when they bring their children to school. The program also provides school-like day care for preschoolers, so that the mothers can participate in activities and the children can be introduced to school routines. The mothers are also welcomed by the school principals or other administrators who talk to them in Spanish about their children's school work and the value of their participation in their children's education.

Building on abilities

All of the programs show clients that school success is possible—that students have what it takes to succeed. The director of Nosotros Consulting, a CBO that works with migrant students in partnership with the Mabton, Washington, school district, pointed out that the all too common view of the immigrant student as *pobrecito* (poor little thing) is neither accurate nor constructive. He finds that schools too often coddle nontraditional students, killing their chances for success, and believes that instead, schools should challenge students and coach them toward success. Nosotros Consulting's program tutors high school students and helps them accrue credits

toward graduation or the GED. Similarly, at the Pacoima Urban Village in California, staff assert that every constituent, adult and child, is a member of the school/community partnership, and that the partnership's goal is to develop the members' capacity to succeed in school and elsewhere.

Evaluation

Effective partnerships monitor their programs' results and use what they learn to celebrate their success and improve their services. High quality programs have set clear goals for their work, and they record their progress in reaching them.

Evaluation takes several guises. Funders often require formal program evaluation. To meet these requirements, partners collect data for each of their clients on indicators of school success—grades, school attendance (most frequently mentioned by the survey respondents), credit accumulation, teacher evaluation, return to school of drop-outs, graduation or attainment of the GED, and enrollment in postsecondary education. Other benchmarks relevant to meeting program goals might include clients' job placement and employer evaluation. Some programs collect data on clients' improvement on standardized tests and other measures: reading, language arts, and math scores; standard measures of early childhood development; and measurement of adult literacy, oral English, and parenting skills.

When funders request data other than that routinely compiled by schools, data collection can be problematic for the partnerships. For example, a family center had trouble collecting client contact data, because they did not keep a contact log. They did not have a receptionist to take charge of that function. Moreover, categories assumed by the funder were not meaningful, because the center's programs blur distinctions between the served and server. The center negotiated a new data collection plan with the funder: going door-to-door in the community, asking people if they had used the center's services and, if so, for what purpose. The data collected in this way turned out to be not only satisfactory for the funder but also extremely useful in informing the center about how the community viewed it, who had received what services and resources, and what they might do better to meet client needs. In the end, both the foundation and the partnership were satisfied with this data collection activity.

Other programs are frustrated by external evaluations that don't report evaluation results to them or don't discuss the results with them or don't suit the evaluation to the program's needs. A staff member at one of the alternative middle schools complained that these schools are evaluated in the same way as other middle schools. Although the results are positive, the evaluations are not as useful as they could be if they took into account the unique features of the program. The results assure the school district that the schools are working, but they do not tell program directors what they want to know.

Programs also evaluate progress toward their goals by keeping track informally of program effects on individuals. In most cases, there is frequent communication among the partners and program staff who are closest to the work, including regular meetings as well as informal contact. Anecdotal evidence presented in these contacts contributes to modifying programs incrementally.

Another aspect of informal evaluation is the proliferation of stories that capture the high points in the life of a program. Beyond improving grades and test scores and other indicators that can be aggregated to show the program's overall effectiveness, each program has stories about its effects on people. These compelling stories fortify the staff and keep them focused. They serve as emblems of the program's concern with

improving people's lives. The baptism story is one of them, and the story of former gang members serving as staff members in a youth empowerment program is another. One staff member described story-telling during a funder's site visit. When a program client cried while telling the story about how the program had rescued her and her children, the visitor began to cry as well. Funding was renewed.

Although the school/CBO partnerships engage in evaluation, this is the area about which there is the least confidence. Their forte is programs. They understand that evaluation is crucial both for keeping their programs on target and for justifying their work to those who want to know. Whether they are foundations, government agencies, or school districts, funders want evidence of impact. There is a need to identify new ways for school/CBO partnerships to gather objective data and keep comprehensive descriptive accounts. Another need is for ways to track programs' long-term effects on their clients. Well-documented programs with thorough evaluations of program effectiveness can provide solid information to other school/CBO partnerships who are developing programs.

In sum, programs considered by others in the field to be effective exhibit certain basic characteristics—adequate resources, structural and programmatic flexibility, responsive program design, and program evaluation. These attributes may be useful to those who are designing and operating new partnerships and programs if they are regarded as touchstones for development.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations for developing effective partnerships and programs came from the partnerships described here.

Partnership Recommendations

Strong, reliable partnerships are fundamental to building effective programs that support school success among language minority students. All of the survey respondents had something to say about the kinds of relationships that partners should develop.

Assure that potential partners are fully committed to the partnership

As they enter into partnership, organizations should take time to develop a shared vision for their work together, both programmatic and managerial. Each partner's responsibilities need to be spelled out. Many of the individuals who participated in this study advised that new partnerships need to make their relationships formal through letters of agreement, and that they need to nurture their relationships through frequent communication to maintain shared notions of program direction and partner responsibilities. The representatives of the partner organizations who will work most closely with the programs must understand their rationale and design well enough to advocate for them. In building a partnership, developing shared ownership for the work is worth the time it takes.

Maintain communication

As partnerships mature, partners need to communicate frequently to manage programs, monitor their progress, and plan ahead. These conversations also help develop respect and trust among the partners, understanding of each other's perspectives, and commitment to the partnership and the work. Many partnerships hold regular meet-

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ings of all partners, in addition to frequent informal communication among the individuals who are closest to the daily program operations.

Program Recommendations

Ensure strong leadership at the program level

Because programs tend to alter their shape as they grow, it is crucial that strong leaders guide them day to day so that the programs continue to adhere to the partnerships' goals. Strong leaders can attract other competent staff and help everyone get through the difficulties that are bound to arise. Full-time, highly knowledgeable leadership is essential.

Start small and build carefully

Program veterans recommend beginning the partnership's work with one or two programs that respond appropriately to clients' needs, monitoring them according to the partnership's goals, and refining them. Partnerships with a history of successful programs attract funds for new programs.

Look for opportunity

Sometimes the schools and communities with the greatest needs are the most amenable to change. At Putnam High School in Springfield, Massachusetts, for example, gang-related deaths left a power vacuum in what had been a gang-dominated high school. The school district reacted quickly, working with CBOs to develop the Community Service Learning program that allows students to take different roles and gain respect in the community.

CONCLUSION

Beyond the basic descriptions of partnerships—what they do and how they work, characteristics of successful partnerships, and recommendations for others—this study offers two general learnings. One concerns the purpose of school/CBO partnerships' work with language minority children who are at risk for school failure; the other concerns the need for more research. Two important dimensions of successful partnerships deserve more scrutiny: the contributions of staff members who share the constituents' backgrounds and the effects of partnership and program plasticity.

Intense pressure on schools to improve test scores privileges activities that have a direct impact on academic achievement. The resources of schools are finite, and their traditions are firm. As schools are currently configured, they cannot take on all of the work that is essential to supporting academic achievement. Students who do not have that support must find it elsewhere or flounder. Partnerships with CBOs and other organizations help to broaden the base of support for language minority students. Partnerships support academic achievement not by "mimicking schools" (C. Collier, personal communication, November 1998) but by filling in and reinforcing the supports that schools have presumed in the past. Broadly viewed, they focus on helping students achieve school success, a construct composed of behaviors such as understanding instruction, attending school regularly, taking leadership in the school and community, and so forth. Supporting school success may require tutoring in the student's first language, or it may require services that have traditionally been viewed as secondary to academic achievement— for example, health care and advice on pregnancy prevention so that students can come to school, and parent education programs so that parents

can help students with school work. The partnerships understand that these services are not secondary at all; rather, they are part of the base that students need to achieve academically. By sharing in this broader view, schools can move toward greater success in retaining and educating language minority students who are at risk.

Much more needs to be known about the contributions of program staff who share the clients' backgrounds and who have succeeded in moving into the social mainstream. This is an educational resource and a use of human capital that is very promising. Immigrants may be uniquely qualified to help schools and communities connect to support language minority students. When they serve in school/CBO partnerships where professional certification is not required as it is for teaching, they can make significant contributions. They have an authority in this domain that allows them to guide and influence students at least as much as school personnel do. This phenomenon needs to be documented.

Finally, the fluid nature of successful school/CBO partnerships needs to be better understood. Their flexibility counterbalances the well-documented rigidity of schools—a rigidity that contributes to schools' difficulty in serving at-risk language minority students. Documentation of how these two dynamics co-exist or affect each other over time would be instructive.

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Appendix

Program	Location	Year started	Program functions
Academic Youth Employment Program	Toppenish, WA	1987	Provides tutoring and career exploration for migrant and at-risk youth.
ACCESS	Dearborn, MI	1977	Provides bilingual community resources such as health services, family counseling, vocational education, cultural arts programs, adult education, and mental health and social services.
Alum Rock Even Start Program	San Jose, CA	1991	Provides literacy and parenting classes for adults and early childhood programs for children.
ASPIRA	Miami, FL	1992	Operates alternative middle schools for at-risk students, particularly Puerto Rican, Latino, and Haitian.
Bell Cluster Healthy Start Collaborative	Bell, CA	1995	Improves student achievement by addressing health and counseling needs; provides tutoring and mentoring.
Cambridge Community Services City Links	Cambridge, MA	1992	Introduces linguistic minority youth to government careers and trains them for leadership positions in the community through public sector apprenticeships, public service career seminars, and replication.
Castelar Healthy Start	Los Angeles, CA	1992	Addresses human service needs of families and children in the community through case management, health care, parenting classes, etc. Also addresses domestic violence, substance abuse, and gang-related issues.
Challenger Center	Adelphi, MD	1993	Combines interagency resources to ensure the well-being of young children and their families and communities. Family centers provide tutoring, teacher-parent conferences, English as a second language (ESL) classes, and other services.
Children's Aid Society Community Schools	New York, NY	1991	Strengthens the educational process for teachers, parents, and students through health counseling, recreation, and education for the entire family.
Colonias Project	El Paso, TX	1990	Builds community centers in impoverished border communities and supports development of programs that provide social services, connect schools and communities, and help students learn English.
Community Achievement Project in the Schools	New York, NY	1990	Brokers partnerships between schools and CBOs to enhance students' well-being, attendance, and academic performance.
Community Service Learning	Springfield, MA	1988	Provides tutoring and mentoring integrated with the school curriculum.
Cuban-American National Council	Miami, FL	1987	Runs four alternative schools for Latino youth in trouble. The program attempts to turn disconnected and underachieving youth into successful students.
Filipino Youth Empowerment Project	Seattle, WA	1995	Provides tutoring, mentoring, and leadership training for high school students.
Junior National Health Service Corps	Kansas City, KS	1995	Introduces Latino youth from migrant or other poorly paid families to careers in medicine that serve the communities; assists in improving reading, writing, and spoken English skills.
Language Acquisition and Transition Program	Houston, TX	1996	Offers ESL instruction and vocational skills and supports students' academic development.

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Program	Location	Year started	Program functions
Lennox/Hughes/UCLA Partnership	Lennox, CA	1992	Prepares families for young children's entry into school and prepares high school students for higher education and careers. Supports hands-on science and technology activities, English and native language instruction, after-school activities, and counseling in intergroup relations. Also strives to reduce problematic behaviors and improve health.
Liberty Partnerships Program	South Bronx, NY	1989	Provides support services to at-risk students, designed to increase students' motivation and ability to complete secondary education and to seek entry into post-secondary education and the work force.
Migrant Education Even Start	Kansas City, KS	1996	Offers ESL literacy instruction to parents and children.
Modesto Healthy Start Program	Modesto, CA	1992	Provides comprehensive, integrated school-based and school-linked services to families.
Mother-Daughter Program	El Paso, TX	1986	Supports mother-daughter teams in setting and working toward higher education goals.
Murchison Family Center	Los Angeles, CA	1991	Helps students and families access health and support services in order to minimize barriers to learning.
New Beginnings	San Diego, CA	1988	Promotes family and community well-being through risk-prevention and early academic intervention services.
Pacoima Urban Village	Pacoima, CA	1990	Provides comprehensive services for children and families and acts as a community center for adults; also is involved with curriculum and instruction at the school.
Project Achieve/Theodore Roosevelt High School: St. Rita's Center for Immigrants and Refugees	Bronx, NY	1989	Facilitates student transition into high school.
Project Look: Learning Outreach Organization for Kids	Seattle, WA	1992	Provides academic and social services to disadvantaged children and families in low-income housing complexes.
Refugee and Immigrant Forum	Everett, WA	1979	Offers tutoring for at-risk immigrant youth from many countries.
School of the Future	Houston, TX	1987	Provides site-based counseling support services, violence prevention programs, drug prevention education, parent services, and community collaboration.
South East Regional Resource Center	Alaska	1976	Provides preschool and infant learning projects, family literacy programs, adult basic education, and postsecondary training in rural Alaska.
Transforming Education for New York's Newest	New York, NY	1996	Supports New York City schools in their efforts to respond to immigrant students through inservice professional development modules for teachers.
Vocational Building Skills, Inc.	Sanders, AZ	1983 and 1989	Serves Navajo, Hopi, and White Mountain Apache tribes/nations; trains high school and GED graduates for jobs that are available in the area, especially carpentry and computer technology.

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